7-2015

The Cooperative Extension Program Development Model: Adapting to a Changing Context

Nancy K. Franz
Iowa State University, nfranz@iastate.edu

Barry A. Garst
Clemson University

Ryan J. Gagnon
Clemson University

The Cooperative Extension Program Development Model: Adapting to a Changing Context

Nancy Franz
Iowa State University

Barry A. Garst
Ryan J. Gagnon
Clemson University

For over 100 years, Cooperative Extension in the United States has used a consistently articulated program development model including program planning, design and implementation, and evaluation that involves stakeholders in the process. This issue of the Journal of Human Sciences and Extension examines the history and evolution of the program development model for successful Extension work and adaptations to that model that have emerged due to the changing educational context. This issue provides information on how elements of the model have changed over the last 100 years; delves into contemporary issues and challenges; and provides important analysis, implications, lessons learned, and applications for current and future success of Extension programs. In this article, we provide a definition of a program, the rationale for using a program development model in Extension work, the Extension Program Development Model, other program development models used by Extension professionals, and the changing context surrounding Extension work that impacts the Program Development Model.

Keywords: Cooperative Extension, Extension, program, program development model, context, Extension professional, program development

For over 100 years, Cooperative Extension (Extension) in the United States has used a consistently articulated program development model including program planning, design and implementation, and evaluation that involves stakeholders in the process (Baker, 1984; Boyle & Mulcahy, n.d.; Forest & Baker, 1994; Franz & Townson, 2008; Heckel, 2004; Seevers et al., 1997, 2007, 2012; Vines & Anderson, 1976). This issue of the *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension* (1) articulates the historical Program Development Model on which successful Extension work is based and adaptations due to the changing educational context; (2) provides information on how elements of the model have changed over the last 100 years (technology, audiences, etc.); (3) delves into contemporary issues and solutions/adaptations; and (4) provides important analysis, implications, lessons learned, and applications for current and future success

Direct correspondence to Nancy Franz at nfranz@iastate.edu

of Extension programs. In this article, we provide a definition of a program, the rationale for using a program development model in Extension work, the Extension Program Development Model, other program development models used by Extension professionals, and the changing context surrounding Extension work that impacts the Program Development Model.

Definition of a Program

Extension professionals use the word *program* in a variety of ways to describe their efforts. They may call a meeting or single educational event a program (i.e., I am holding a pesticide safety program tonight), a series of educational opportunities a program (i.e., I am teaching a five-part program on financial management), or a comprehensive effort aimed at addressing a particular issue a program (i.e., I am working on a youth leadership development program). The definition of *program* used for describing the Extension Program Development Model in this special issue of the *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension* is "the product resulting from all activities in which a professional educator and learner are involved. For example, it would include need analysis, planning, instruction, promotion, evaluation, and reporting" (Boyle, 1981, p. 5). Patrick Boyle, the originator of this definition, served as a Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin Extension and promoted this definition throughout the country for Extension and adult education. Seevers et al. (1997, 2007, 2012) used Boyle's definition in their textbook on Cooperative Extension. When the term *program* is used in this issue of the *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension*, it describes a comprehensive approach to addressing an issue with education. It does not describe single Extension educational opportunities, one time projects, or a series of educational events.

Why Profess and Use a Program Development Model

The use of a particular program development model in Extension programming has been promoted for a variety of reasons. Buford, Bedeian, and Lindner (1995) suggest using a program development model to improve Extension program success, direction and purpose, program performance, and the Extension professional's ability to cope with change. Forest, McKenna, and Donovan (1986) find using a program development model in Extension work results in the best use of fiscal resources, efficiently addresses client problems, helps Extension professionals respond to shifts in organizational direction, enhances accountability, and shows return on investment of public funds for public officials. Similarly, Boyle and Mulcahy (n.d.) indicate using a program development model enhances program relevance and allows for concentrated resources to be focused on the most serious, contemporary needs of a large number of people. This in turn shows value to relevant stakeholders, decision makers, the community, Extension, and the Extension professional. Baker (1984) and Forest and Baker (1994) believe a program development model helps Extension professionals address problems that are increasingly complex; better meet the rising educational levels of learners; compete with programs offered by

other organizations; and improve program effectiveness, relevance, and efficiency. Seevers and Graham (2012) propose that using a program development model helps Extension professionals reach intended audiences, use time efficiently, and improve stakeholder buy-in and support for programs.

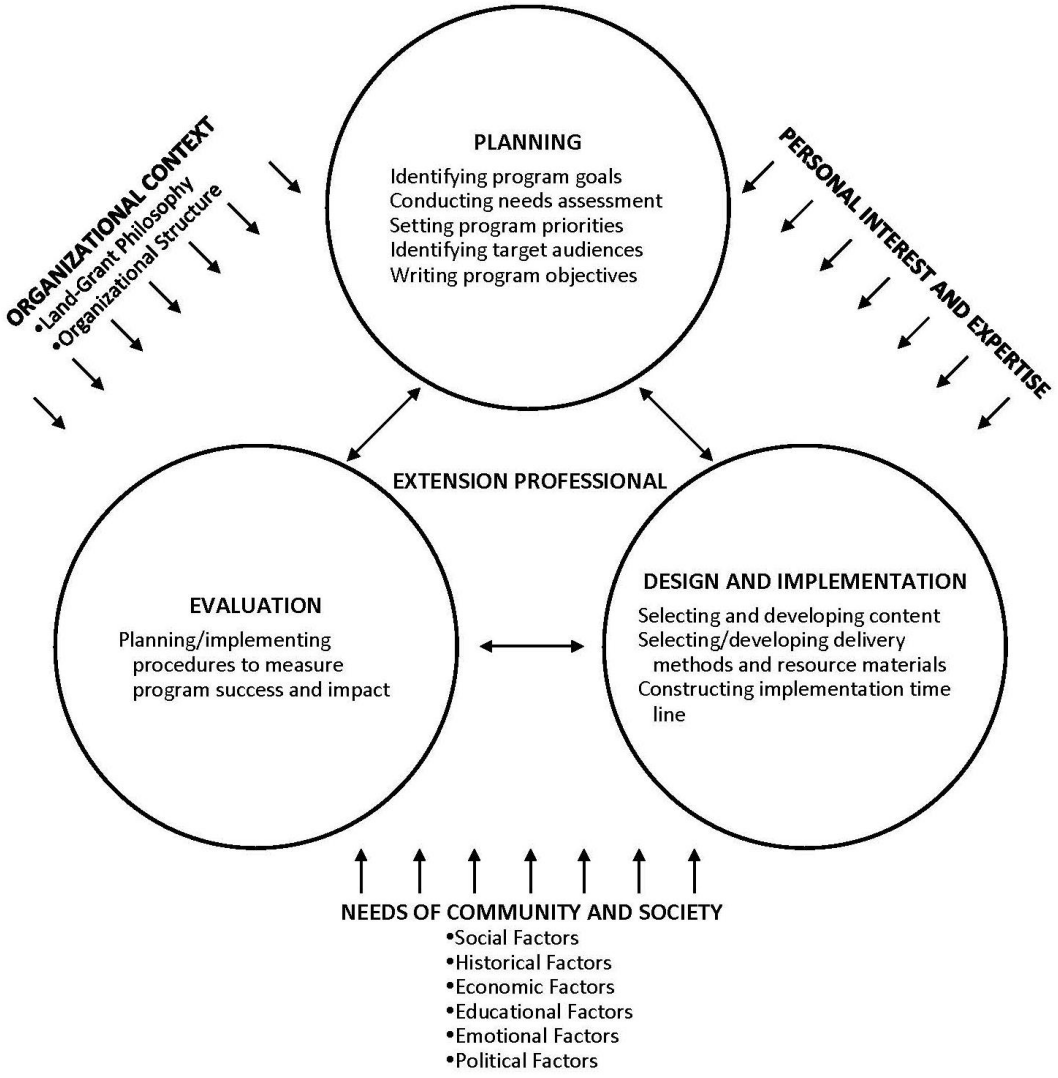
The most comprehensive rationale for using an Extension program development model was articulated by Duttweiler (2012). He suggested use of the model creates (1) improved outcomes, (2) a focus on intended outcomes, (3) a basis for resource planning and management, (4) documentation of the educational process for understanding and accountability, (5) reflection and assessment for personal and organizational growth, (6) a framework for diagnosing disappointments, (7) a framework for replicating success, (8) a basis for Extension professionals to negotiate expectations, and (9) a way for Extension professionals to communicate impact.

A Widely Articulated Extension Program Development Model

Program development has been defined by the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP) as "a continuous series of complex, interrelated processes which result in the accomplishment of the educational mission and objectives of the organization" (Seevers & Graham, 2012, p. 103). The program development model most often used by Extension professionals includes (1) needs assessment, (2) program design and implementation, (3) program evaluation and reporting, and (4) stakeholder involvement (Franz & Townson, 2008). Seevers and Graham (2012) popularized this model across the country in their Extension textbook as (1) planning; (2) design and implementation; and (3) evaluation informed by organizational context, personal interest and expertise, and the needs of the community and society (Figure 1). Because many Extension graduate and undergraduate students, as well as practitioners, start with the model articulated by Seevers and Graham (2012) when studying and practicing Extension program development, it is the basis for discussion in this special issue of the *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension* and will be examined throughout the issue.

In the last two decades, Extension has increased its focus on program evaluation and reporting in program development due to cuts in public funding and increased accountability for the use of these funds (Franz, 2009, 2011; Franz, Arnold, & Baughman, 2014; Kalambokidis, 2004, 2011). Wells-Marshall (2012) also found Extension staff are more committed to using evaluation results, analyzing data, and focusing evaluation. All Extension systems overtly articulate using the main three elements of Conklin's (1997) model – planning, design and implementation, and evaluation (Figure 1). However, the other elements in the model are less often emphasized or are seen as assumptions of Extension program development.

Figure 1. A Basic Program Development Model



Source: Conklin (1997). Used with permission from Seevers and Conklin (2012).

Other Program Development Models

Program development models vary. Extension professionals often learn about and use program development models differently than described above. For example, they may discover program development models through graduate coursework in adult education or through curriculum and instruction or other professional development opportunities. They experiment with these models, or even parts of these models, with different levels of depth and with varying degrees of integration. Many Extension professionals blend a number of program development models to fit their context, interests, and values. The program development models described below have much in common with the Extension Program Development Model articulated by Seevers and

Graham (2012); all the models described address needs assessment, program design and implementation, and program evaluation but have differing emphasis on specific aspects or operationalization of the model (Boone, Safrit, & Jones, 2002).

Ralph Tyler's (1949) program development model analyzed the educational program of an institution by asking (1) What educational purposes should be attained, (2) What educational experiences can be provided to meet those purposes, (3) How can these educational experiences be effectively organized, and (4) How can it be determined whether these purposes have been attained? Tyler's (1949) model focuses on the desired results of curriculum and instruction in formal educational settings. He provided few suggestions for involving stakeholders in program development, but he did suggest a series of questions to guide program evaluations.

Boone et al. (2002) provided a conceptual programming model from a systems approach for organizational improvement. In this model, the program planner is seen as a change agent and decision maker through program facilitation, implementation, and evaluation. Program development is viewed as complex and technical. The main steps in this model include understanding the organization and its renewal process, linking the organization to its publics (i.e., community), designing the planned program, implementing the planned program, evaluation, and accountability. Program development is comprehensively addressed at macro and micro levels, but no decision-making power is given to stakeholders, and diversity of stakeholders is not addressed.

Using a lifelong learning perspective, Boyle (1981) proposed that there are developmental, institutional, and informational programs with varying goals, sources of objectives, use of knowledge, involvement of the learner, roles of the programmer, and standards of effectiveness. He suggested these steps for programming: (1) establish a philosophical basis for programming; (2) analyze problems and needs or concerns of people and communities; (3) involve potential clientele; (4) determine intellectual and social development levels; (5) select sources to investigate and analyze in determining program objectives; (6) recognize organizational and individual constraints; (7) establish criteria for determining program priorities; (8) decide on degree of rigidity/flexibility of planned programs; (9) legitimize and obtain support of formal and informal power situations; (10) select and organize learning experiences; (11) identify instructional design with appropriate methods, techniques, and devices; (12) utilize effective promotional priorities; (13) obtain resources necessary to support the program; (14) determine the effectiveness, results, and impact; and (15) communicate program value to appropriate decision makers. Boyle (1981) fully included stakeholder involvement in his program development process.

Caffarella and Ratcliff Daffron (2013) provided an interactive model of program planning for adult education reflecting the dynamism of the changing educational context. They suggested

their planning concepts are not used in a particular order – discerning the context; building a solid base of support; identifying and prioritizing ideas and needs; developing program goals and objectives; designing instruction; devising transfer-of-learning plans; formulating evaluation plans; selecting formats, schedules, and staffing programs; preparing and managing budgets; organizing marketing campaigns; and coordinating details. This applied model focuses on the Extension professional as an instructor on a micro level and does not take into account complex situations.

Cervero and Wilson (2006) proposed a people-centered model of program planning based on responsible planning theory. Their model focuses on politics, ethical obligations, power, interests, communication, and language as important contexts for the success of programs. In this model, programming is a social activity requiring constant negotiation with stakeholders. The program planner negotiates the program's needs assessment; the educational, management, and political objectives; instructional design and implementation; administrative organization and operation; and formal and informal education strategies and curricula. If all of these elements are negotiated, the learners are empowered to meet their needs and their voices are fully heard and acted upon. Therefore, the planner is primarily concerned about the management and politics of outcomes through power relations of program stakeholders. This model has little emphasis on program evaluation and reporting.

Klein and Morse (2009) described business plans developed and used by 54 Extension teams for statewide programs. Elements of the plan included an executive summary, list of program team members, educational goals, target audience, market research on target audience needs, promotional plans, logic model and research base, public and private value, implementation plan, evaluation plans, and financial plan. This approach intends to reach out to audiences as a community of interest around a topic for learning rather than a geographic community of learners. This process also creates an analysis of comparative advantage (i.e., competing educational programs), improved collaboration between educators and specialists, articulation of financial stability of programs, and meeting of organizational needs for detailed statewide information on programs.

The University of Wisconsin – Extension (2003) logic model is often used as a program development tool in Extension. The logic model describes the program's situation, inputs, outputs, outcomes, assumptions, external factors, and evaluation to visually show how the program is supposed to work. A logic model is most often used by Extension professionals as a tool to describe their program to stakeholders and rarely used as a program development model (Braverman & Engle, 2009). Logic models are often used to develop more detailed program and evaluation plans (Rennekamp & Arnold, 2009). The logic model as a planning tool often does not take into account the complex context of program development. For a full critique of the logic model in Extension program planning, see Arnold's (2015) critique later in this issue.

The program development models used by Extension professionals often rely on the approach and simplicity of use of the model. Tyler's (1949) approach is a classic model most often used directly or as the basis for all program development models. For example, Tyler's (1949) four programming questions can be directly cross-walked with the planning model presented by Seevers and Graham (2012) and the logic model (University of Wisconsin – Extension, 2003). Boone, Safrit, and Jones's (2002) model is the most comprehensive and complex of the models used by those wanting to address programming from a systems perspective. Boyle (1981), Caffarella and Ratcliff Daffron (2013), and Klein and Morse's (2009) models are attractive to Extension professionals who prefer a micro and simplified approach to program development (i.e., a checklist of specific actions), while Cervero and Wilson's (2006) model appeals to Extension professionals who value programming with social justice goals. The interests of Extension professionals and their programming context, including their organizational history, tend to determine which program model or models they use to guide their educational efforts.

Changing Context

The ever-changing context surrounding Extension work impacts the Program Development Model. These changes include a move from discipline-specific programming to interdisciplinary program expectations, changes in program funding sources and expectations of funders, and increased interest of funders to implement evidence-based programming that reflects high quality fidelity of program delivery. As a result of these changes, Extension's relationship with stakeholders includes increased accountability for program value and the need for increased capacity building of paid and volunteer staff. Extension systems have also developed and used specific criteria to select programs to pursue and maintain, such as program attractiveness, competitive position, alternative coverage, program urgency, funding limitations, and emerging issues (Franz, 2005).

This Issue

The articles in this special issue of the *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension* explore how Extension has adapted to a changing context and associated changes in the Program Development Model. Each article highlights a particular component of Extension's Program Development Model, including program development and Extension's public value, needs assessment, program design, program implementation, program evaluation, involving stakeholders, the importance of professional development of Extension professionals for Program Development Model success, and Extension's role in community-university engagement. The final article provides a synthesis of the special issue and recommendations for future directions for Extension.

References

Arnold, M. (2015). Connecting the dots: Improving Extension program planning with program umbrella models. *Journal of Human Sciences and Extension, 3*(2), 48–67.

Baker, H. (1984). The program planning process. In D. Blackburn (Ed.), *Extension handbook* (pp. 50-64). Geulph, Canada: University of Guelph.

Boone, E., Safrit, D., & Jones, J. (2002). *Developing programs in adult education: A conceptual programming model* (2nd ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Boyle, P. (1981). *Planning better programs.* New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Boyle, P. & Mulcahy, S. (n.d.). *Take a giant step: A guide to major programs.* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin – Extension.

Braverman, M., & Engle, M. (2009). Theory and rigor in Extension program evaluation planning. *Journal of Extension, 47*(3), Article 3FEA1. Retrieved from http://www.joe.org/joe/2009june/a1.php

Buford, J., Bedeian, A., & Lindner, J. (1995). *Management in Extension* (3rd ed.). Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University.

Caffarella, R., & Ratcliff Daffron, S. (2013). *Planning programs for adult learners: A practical guide* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Cervero, R., & Wilson, A. (2006). *Working the planning table: Negotiating democratically for adult, continuing, and workplace education.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Conklin, N. (1997). *University Extension*. Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University.

Duttweiler, M. (2006). *CCEPDC 101 Program Development* [video file]. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_detailpage&v=XRLlt1evrG0

Forest, L., & Baker, H. (1994). The program planning process. In D. Blackburn (Ed.), *Extension handbook: Processes and practices* (pp. 86-99). Toronto, Canada: Thompson Educational Publishing.

Forest, L., McKenna, C., & Donovan, J. (1986). *A "how-to" handbook for developing Extension long-range plans and major programs.* Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin – Extension. Retrieved from http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/planning/pdf/connect.pdf

Franz, N. (2005). *How does UNH Cooperative Extension determine what programming to pursue?* Personal collection of N. Franz, Iowa State University, Ames, IA.

Franz, N. (2009). Promoting organizational sustainability: Engaging volunteers to tell the program impact story. *International Journal of Volunteer Administration, 26*(3), 3–11.

Franz, N. (2011). Advancing the public value movement: Sustaining Extension during tough times. *Journal of Extension, 49*(2), Article 2COM2. Retrieved from http://www.joe.org/joe/2011april/comm2.php

Franz, N., Arnold, M., & Baughman, S. (2014). The role of evaluation in determining the public value of Extension. *Journal of Extension, 52*(4), Article 4COM3. Retrieved from http://www.joe.org/joe/2014august/comm3.php

Franz, N., & Townson, L. (2008). The nature of complex organizations: The case of Cooperative Extension. In M. T. Braverman, M. Engle, M. E. Arnold, & R. A. Rennekamp (Eds.), Program evaluation in a complex organizational system: Lessons from Cooperative Extension (pp. 5–14). *New Directions for Evaluation, 2008*(120). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. doi:10.1002/ev.272

Heckel, M. (2004). *People make the program: An oral history of Cooperative Extension.* Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension.

Kalambokidis, L. (2004). Identifying the public value in Extension programs. *Journal of Extension, 42*(2), Article 2FEA1. Retrieved from http://www.joe.org/joe/2004april/a1.php

Kalambokidis, L. (2011). Spreading the word about Extension's public value. *Journal of Extension, 49*(2), Article 2FEA1. Retrieved from http://www.joe.org/joe/2011april/a1.php

Klein, T., & Morse, G. (2009). Extension program business plans. In G. Morse (Ed.), *Cooperative Extension's money and mission crisis: The Minnesota response.* Bloomington, IN: *i*Universe.

Rennekamp, R., & Arnold, M. (2009). What progress program evaluation? Reflections on a quarter-century of Extension evaluation practices. *Journal of Extension, 47*(3), Article 3COM1. Retrieved from http://www.joe.org/joe/2009june/comm1.php

Seevers, B., & Graham, D. (2012). *Education through Cooperative Extension* (3rd ed.). Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas.

Seevers, B., Graham, D., & Conklin, N. (2007). *Education through Cooperative Extension* (2nd ed.). Columbus, OH: The Ohio State University Curriculum Materials Service.

Seevers, B., Graham, D., Gamon, J., & Conklin, N. (1997). *Education through Cooperative Extension.* Washington, DC: Delmar Publishers.

Tyler, R. (1949). *Basic principles of curriculum and instruction.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

University of Wisconsin – Extension. (2003). *Logic model.* Retrieved from http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/pdf/LMfront.pdf

Vines, C., & Anderson, M. (1976). *Heritage horizons: Extension's commitment to people.* Madison, WI: Journal of Extension.

Wells-Marshall, J. (2012). *The Extension Program Development Model: A look at commitment and engagement.* Retrieved from http://etd.auburn.edu/handle/10415/3062

Nancy Franz, Ph.D., is an Emeritus Professor in the School of Education in the Higher Education Program at Iowa State University who served with Cooperative Extension in Iowa, New Hampshire, New York, Virginia, and Wisconsin for 33 years. Her scholarship and consulting interests include measuring and articulating the program quality and private and public value of

community-university engagement and the conditions that promote transformative learning in nonformal educational environments.

Barry A. Garst, Ph.D., is an Associate Professor of youth development leadership at Clemson University and a former Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist of youth development at Virginia Tech. Barry's current interests include the influence of over-parenting on youth program quality, developmental outcomes of out-of-school time experiences, and organizational practices that impact youth transformation.

Ryan J. Gagnon, M.A., is a Ph.D. student in Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management at Clemson University. His scholarship interests focus on the multidisciplinary development and assessment of programs, specifically relating to program implementation. His goal is to improve and promote rigorous program design and delivery.

Acknowledgements

The first author thanks Zanariah Mohd Nor, Ph.D. candidate at Iowa State University in the Agricultural and Education Studies Department, for the excellent analysis of program development models for use in Extension as part of her preliminary written exam for Ph.D. candidacy.